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THAT YOUNG ADULTS MAY HOPE

Advice concerning the training of disadvantaged young adults and their social and vocational insertion

Advice to the Minister of Education
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«The rest of the world remains at normal temperature because of the fever of youth. When youthful ardour cools, the teeth of the rest of the world chatter»[1]

Georges Bernanos

INTRODUCTION

That young adults may hope

The members of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation have consistently indicated their interest in the training and living conditions of young people.[2] At the moment they are particularly concerned with the conditions which young Québecers are facing. The economic crisis forces a third of them to exist below the poverty level.

Since last September, the members of the Commission de l'éducation des adultes have met with students, unemployed young people and those on social welfare in various parts of Québec. They have witnessed the distress which is the daily lot of a much too large number of these young people, who feel cut off from society; their most common characteristic is their uncertainty in the face of a seemingly empty future.

The needs of youth fully justify the warning issued last September by the Bishops of Québec. «Fundamentally, they declared, our social

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1. Georges Bernanos, Les grands cimetières sous la lune, Paris, Plon, 1938, page 228.

2. The expression «young people» in this text refers to both boys and girls.

project itself is in danger. We must, therefore, take the situation seriously and find a solution at all costs. Otherwise, they added, we shall sacrifice a generation. Such a sacrifice could constitute our collective suicide, if we are not careful.»[3]

Giving young people back their taste for living and the means to participate in their own development, as well as that of Québec, must be made a priority. The ardour and enthusiasm of youth are necessary to overcome the problems of the present socio-economic crisis, as well as to ensure the future of our society.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation launches an urgent appeal to the Ministre de l'Éducation and to all those in a position to influence our society. It calls upon all the resources of society to improve the situation facing young adults in order to protect the future of Québec.

As part of the On-going Work of the Conseil

The present advice outlines, in greater detail, the concerns of the Commission de l'éducation des adultes, over the last two years.

In May, 1981, the Conseil requested that the Ministre de l'Éducation provide supplementary resources for the adult education network in order to help those in greatest need to improve the conditions under which they live. In the light of the budgetary cutbacks, the Conseil foresaw certain consequences which seemed inevitable. It noted that «those in greatest need are the ones facing the risk of seeing themselves deprived of services. Those on welfare, those working on

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3. Assembly of Québec Roman Catholic Bishops, Statement of the Committee on Social Affairs, Article 13, 10 September, 1982.

their own, the unemployed, the illiterate, the handicapped, the disadvantaged, live on the edge of society. The State will have denied them those services essential for popular education.» The Conseil then expressed its faith in adult education which «prolongs or completes the education of young people.» «Society may look forward to cultural development and a new social existence based on revival by the masses.»[4]

Several months later in January, 1982, the Conseil accepted a recommendation by the Commission de l'éducation des adultes concerning education in co-operation. «At a time of economic and social problems, it is abundantly clear that popular organizations must find new ways of carrying on their activities, if not of surviving. Education in co-operation through the democratic values, responsibility and sharing of autonomy which it imparts, represents an incontestably strong means of action for many such groups. It enables them to find their own solutions to their problems as well as responses to their needs».[5] In this way the Conseil believed, and still does that «co-operation and solidarity enable the disadvantaged, up to now alone, to free themselves personally and collectively by their united efforts».[6]

In May, 1982, the Commission de l'éducation des adultes again drew attention to the vulnerability of «certain groups (who) have even more pressing needs than do others of the disadvantaged: young adults,

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4. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Will the Government of Québec Control the Education of Adults?, May 1981, p. 16.

5. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Education on co-operation a model for the development of popular Education, January, 1982, p. 1.

6. Ibid, p. 2.

women, the handicapped, the aged, the illiterate and the immigrant».[7] In its opinion the Conseil expressed its concern for those young people who leave school without receiving a Diploma of Secondary Studies. «Lacking the preparation required to meet the new demands of the work place, these young people face an unequal battle in finding profitable employment, and become for the most part, welfare recipients».[7] In its recommendation the Conseil defined its objective in these terms: «Certain educational measures, among other things, the least costly in the school system, could, when combined with others of a social and economic nature, permit the most disadvantaged to take their places in our society».[8]

An economic and social crisis

Both the economists and the sociologists agree that high interest rates, the cost of government, increasing unemployment and welfare payments are creating problems which compromise the very future of our society.

The absence or rarety of job opportunities creates stresses which lead, inevitably, to a social malaise which expresses itself among the population in terms of anxiety and an increasing feeling of insecurity. The profound changes in terms of values which our society has undergone have, no doubt, also contributed to this malaise.

Over the last forty years, Québec has experienced major changes, so rapid that its citizens have been sometimes unable to face the

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7. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Les services d'éducation des adultes, un espoir pour les personnes défavorisées, May, 1983, p. 3.

8. Ibid., p. 5.

resulting challenges. Rural Québec has become an urban society. An agricultural community has become industrialized and has set up widespread public services. Governments have changed their ways of carrying on the public business, in fact, they now exercise an authority which has difficulty in reconciling individual and collective freedoms. As an example, consider the progressive centralization of the public administration and the multiplication of government interventions in every area of our personal lives, or measures regarding safety or aid to industry which sometimes encounter financial difficulties in finding the means to underwrite certain developmental projects.

At the same time as political and economic forces became modernized, society showed evidence of a multiplicity of changes. Traditional institutions were shaken to their foundations. They no longer exercise their former influence on society. Family life has changed significantly; the school reforms of the sixties have not yet completely reached one of their goals, that of equality of opportunity. Saturation of the labour market has placed employment out of the reach of too large a number of young people.

Without much fear of error, one may say that Québec society has metamorphosed itself. Values and a way of life have been thrown aside, the generation gap and the accession of technology have greatly changed the work ethic. Established institutions are either discarded or questioned.

In the face of an insecure present and an uncertain future, the young people stand by as powerless spectators to events which, from time to time, cannot but cause them anguish. They are concerned about the menace of nuclear war: one tenth of the destructive power of existing bombs would suffice to erase all trace of human life from the planet. Many are disturbed by the fact that a third of humanity lack the necessities of life and that the same proportion are literally

dying of hunger. They are concerned by the crises which explode daily in the four corners of the earth. Others remain completely indifferent to these tragedies, which are beyond their grasp, or try to deaden their senses in order to be insulated from them.

It must be remembered that these young adults have grown up in a period of instability and disturbance. The older ones are impatient with a way of life which is subject to forces such that the orientations of many of our institutions and programs of action no longer respond to the expectations of young people. The jobs they want do not last very long; they feel like bystanders to developments, with little opportunity to participate in the progress of society.

Educational resources to mobilise for young people

In this advice, the Conseil gives priority to unemployed youth and welfare recipients who, excluded from both the school and the labour market, have nowhere to turn. It hopes to contribute to the definition of actions which are necessary and urgent to improve conditions for young people and to give them hope for the future.

The Conseil's attention is centred on educational actitity and it proposes measures to upgrade the skills of young people by encouraging a return to training, better preparation for work, and a more «satisfying» participation in society.

Education would appear to be the factor common to a number of measures aimed at young people. Such educational activity goes beyond the school and must, to produce results, be carried out in concertation with other important institutions (labour, recreation, social, organizations, etc.). In other words, actions aimed at raising the level of preparation for the labour market and for life in society,

must be carried on in co-ordination with policies of job creation, of support for organizations or structures for the social involvement of young people. Only in these terms is it possible to envisage a series of solutions apt to improve over the short, medium, and long term, the situation in which young adults find themselves.

This, then, is what is at the heart of the Conseils' preoccupations. It is particularly concerned with the educational resources which must be forthcoming in a series of multisectorial measures developed in concertation. One may ask what is the point of creating jobs or planning the creation of new fields of work if youth is not in any position to take advantage of them. In the same way we may ask of what use are the various forms of training, whether vocational or general, if there be no jobs, if life be at an impasse, if there be no future.

It is, therefore, a question of mobilizing diverse educational resources, of opening the doors of the schools, of finding formulae somewhat better adapted to the needs of largely unschooled young people. Thus it will be possible to upgrade the qualification of a significant number of these young people who are too often today outside the school and poorly prepared to enter a shrinking labour market or to participate in the development of Québec society.

CHAPTER I - Québec Youth in 1983

1.1 The number of young people aged 15 to 24 years

Some data are required in order to define the magnitude of the problems with which people are confronted.

The 1981 census shows that Québec has 1 263 775 citizens in the 15 to 24 year age group, that is 19,3% of the total population. Women number 625 080, that is 49,4%, and men number 638 695, that is 50,6% for this age-group.

The drop in Québec's birthrate, which has been apparent for some years, has brought about a progressive reduction in the number of young people in this age group. The sub-group of 20 to 24 year olds is already larger than that of the 15 to 19 year old category. Ignoring immigration of any kind, it is clear that the number of Québec young people aged 15 to 24 years will drop over the next ten years: there are only 922 690 five to fourteen year olds.[9]

1.2 Not one, but many young people

The members of the Commission de l'éducation des adultes were able to meet many hundreds of young people during their study. They attempted to comprehend their concerns and living conditions. They noted significant differences between young workers and students, between rural and urban youth, between young men and women.

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9. Statistics Canada, Canadian Census for 1981, E-563. The statistics mentioned come from this source.

This sixteen year old student is usually enrolled in high school. The eighteen year old who works sixty hours per week in order to make 150$ does not think like someone on social welfare who has settled into a new life style. The girl who has tried in vain to find a job has little in common with the young actress who has secured a role. There are as many different attitudes, needs and ideas as there are young people.

Nonetheless, there are certain characteristics common to all. They are the result of what they have inherited. They have, in general, no «space» of their own, no place to call their own, which creates a clearly discernible disenchantment for many of them. Young people born during the years of the quiet revolution demonstrate a certain apathy when called upon to solve their problems. Have not their elders always looked after them? Many young people want no part of social reform movements. Very few disadvantaged young people are looking to the future in terms of planning. They have few illusions concerning political or social movements.

Several studies confirm these observations. The SORECOM inquiring regarding the value systems of young people concluded as follows: «As far as way of life, work and play are concerned, young people show a great need of emotional security. More conformist than we imagine, they have no interest in politics; these are young people who seem to aspire to a way of life in conformity with the stereotype of the society in which they live ... Historically youth have always been seen as being idealists, those we have met are moderates. They do not dream of remaking the world and look forward, rather, to making the way of life with which they are familiar their own».[10]

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10. SORECOM, Les Valeurs des jeunes de 16 à 20 ans, Service de la recherche, Ministère de l'Education, June 1980, p. 15.

Generally speaking, the young people we have seen were somewhat worried. Many of the boys and girls at school or with jobs have no hope of even getting a post corresponding to their dreams, many question their futures. The least educated are often without hope.

Nevertheless, our contacts with young people, despite the problems they face, permit us to be optimistic. Young people are capable of an enthusiasm and involvement in plans and projects which call upon them to outdo themselves. Often all that is required is an assurance of support to begin with, in order for them to accomplish miracles. This is evident in the many groups which are being formed and which will be discussed later.

Many of them have an active interest in participating on the development of society. They want to feel responsible and useful. Some among them still hope, through their participation, to be able to change and improve the social and economic institutions from which they feel excluded at this time.

If some young people are in need of encouragement and support, others require further training, jobs and, finally, others the basic requirements for existence.

1.3 The Students

In the autumn of 1981 the number of students between the ages of 15 and 24 years rose to 501 647, distributed as follows: 266 205 in high school, 130 723 in the cegeps, 73 000 in university and 31 719 in the Adult Education Services.[11]

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11. Ministère de l'Éducation, L'éducation au Québec, Report of the Activities of the Ministère de l'Éducation 1980-1981.

These students are aware of the effects of the economic crisis on the direction of their studies and on their futures. Their message was clear. We were particularly impressed by the frankness and warmth of the opinions expressed by high school students. The young people informed us that they were in no hurry to face up to the problems of the labour market. Many repeated that they preferred not to hope in order not to be disappointed. Such confusion leads too many of them into apathy. Our impression is confirmed by the statements of many witnesses and by hundreds of letters to the editor.

Groups of students have loudly expressed their discontent and dissatisfaction. Some complain of educational services poorly adapted to their needs. Many deplore the isolation to which the academic world condemns them. «We are 3 000», said one of them, «yet we are directed and scattered across the levels».

On the other hand, we have noted the satisfaction of many other students we have met. They express their willingness to increase their knowledge and to pursue their studies in order to make an enviable place for themselves in society. Under the circumstances, the increase in cegep enrolment, despite the drop in the number of high school students, may be grounds for encouragement. «These (6 000) young people,» wrote the editorialist Marcel Pepin, «have returned to school because, in many cases, they know not where to go. Rather than be unemployed or live from hand to mouth, they prefer to improve their schooling in the hope that the future will smile upon them».[12]

1.4 The Young Workers

In September, 1982, 522 000 young people from 15 to 24 years of age

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12. Marcel Pepin, Le Soleil, 20 August, 1982

were employed either full or part time. 156 000 of these were between the ages of 15 and 19 years. There were fewer girls (247 000) than boys (275 000) in this group.[13]

Thus, more young women than young men were idle, and their situation vis-à-vis the labour market is more difficult. In fact, one study shows that given the same level of scolarity, more girls are unemployed than boys.[14] They are found mostly in low level jobs, poorly paid and with little security. And, even in the same jobs, they are more poorly paid than are their confrères. Moreover, they tend to be concentrated in those sectors of employment most vulnerable to technological change, such as clerks and secretaries. It is clear, in the light of present trends, that their situation will become more critical as automation, for example, continues its advance.

Many young people are engaged in a vocation or trade with good working conditions. This is most often the case when they have a diploma or adequate vocational training. Others, more numerous, have poorly paid jobs. The last hired, they are often the first to be fired. Generally, they are not unionized and have no fringe benefits. Receiving low salaries, they must work long hours to make ends meet. They are often given the most routine and the dirtiest jobs. «They must learn their trade and begin at the bottom of the ladder,» we are told. Having listened to the noise and breathed the dust of the places where they work, we have quickly grasped their lack of interest in their work. There is little to hold them in jobs that are tedious and which lead nowhere.

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13. Bureau de la Statistique du Québec Données sur la population active: Québec, Ontario et Canada, September, 1982.

14. Louise Bigras, Relance: sur l'égalité en emploi, MEQ, 1982, pp. 15-20.

In fact, young people are eager to work. They are prepared to take on rough and monotonous jobs as long as there is a chance of their leading to something better. However, the most vulnerable are those who lack the training required to move up to better positions. These are limited to the most routine occupations, which explains why we look down our noses at how some young people earn their daily bread. «The question which we have so often asked ourselves in recent years: Why are not the young people involved? Should be restated as follows: Why are young people kept in the background and what are to be the consequences of this exclusion on their access to education, culture and work?»[15]

1.5 Unemployed Young People

The level of unemployment among young people is one of the greatest scandals of this decade. The Québec Bishops passed a severe judgement on the fate reserved to young people. Last September they stated: «Almost half of our young workers are without jobs, living either on unemployment insurance or on welfare payments. The same society that preached the values of consumption to young people now requires them to be poorly lodged, ill fed and on the outside looking in. The sons and daughters of the society of abundance are, to a large extent, reduced to poverty and misery».[16]

The number of the unemployed between the ages of 15 and 24 «reduced to poverty and misery» reached 204 000; in July, 1982 the rate of

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15. Franco Ferrarotti, Employment of Young People: problems and perspective, Jeunesse et travail, UNESCO, 1979, p. 43.

16. Assembly of Québec Bishops, op. cit., Statement of the Social Affairs Committee, 10 September, 1982, Article 5.

unemployment for this age-group rose to 24,3%.[17] It is greater than that of most industrialized countries. It is higher than that of all the Canadian provinces, except Newfoundland and New Brunswick.[18] But, figures do not tell the whole story. «Behind the 'official' unemployed young people there are hidden, according to many sources, a significant number of jobless youth, but these are 'disguised'. Classified by some as inactive full-time, they are too discouraged to look for non-existent jobs».[19]

The lack of scholarity of many young people has an important place in this unhappy picture. The scarcity of job opportunities puts those that are available beyond the reach of young people with inadequate training.

University graduates have the best chances of entering the work force. College graduates have an unemployment rate which is half that of those with high school diplomas. In the cegeps, graduates of the technical sectors find employment more easily than do those with a general background. The same is true for graduates of the Long Vocational Course in comparison with those following the short Vocational Course[20].

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17. Le Soleil, «Les jeunes de la crise,» 27 September, 1982.

18. Secretariat of State, Canada, Statistics on Young People, 1981.

19. Conférence socio-économique du Québec, Les jeunes et le travail, p. 30.

20. Marc Audet, Relance 1978, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1979.

1.6 Young People on Welfare

As it presently exists, social welfare represents a shameful waste of human resources in terms of a generation of young people who are better educated than were their parents.

In August, 1982, 84 076 persons under the age of 25 received social welfare payments. 65 579 of these cases were capable of working. 18 549 had set up house. By November, 1982, the number of young welfare recipients reached 88 000.[21] According to many social workers, the actual number of those eligible for social welfare payments is very much higher. Some have a right to benefits but refuse to «accept charity», or when they are in a position to further their studies, make use of loans and bursaries as a more acceptable formula. Others, poorly informed, are ignorant of the resources available.

Those young people on welfare, able to and available for work, come from all the trades and vocations: the service industries, building and construction, general repairs, transportation. They have the greatest possible variety of backgrounds: mothers' helper, labourer, sales-person, waitress, or waiter, truckdriver, cashier, dressmaker, lumberman, etc.

Our discussions with young welfare recipients were revealing. Many young single persons who receive 146$ per month of social welfare payments emphasized their inability to pay rent or to buy food and clothing. Some have returned to their parents' homes or have found work for a few hours a week in a pharmacy or grocery store.

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21. Ministère du Travail, de la Main-d'oeuvre et de la Sécurité du revenu, Direction des politiques de la sécurité du revenu, November, 1982.

Like the young unemployed, those on welfare wish to be useful. Many of them spoke to us of their desire to become independent, to work like other people, to marry and to have children. Some have claimed to have undergone as many as sixty interviews without finding a job. For want of anything better many proposed to return to school. Such a desire, however, is difficult to accomplish for all those incapable of paying the cost of their transportation from where they live to the school or college. Lost dreams lead to scepticism and discouragement. Many of these young people feel rejected by a society which has no place for them, where they are denied even the dignity of the right to work.

1.7 Personal Social and Economic Repercussions

Meetings with unemployed young people and those on social welfare lead to an understanding of the personal, social and economic consequences and of the price which Québec should and must pay for having failed to struggle effectively against the unemployment and inactivity of its youth.

The young people spoke of their isolation. They must give up the companionship of their friends who have jobs, their life styles are too different. Their lack of funds becomes an obstacle to continuing their former social habits.

The boys and girls spoke of the bitterness and disillusionment caused by inactivity. They are weighed down by boredom. Some have had nervous breakdowns. Many have claimed that repeated rebuffs in their search for work has made them doubt their own worth. Their feelings run the gamut from apathy to frustration, from anxiety to a feeling of being left out.

Visits make clear the strained relations that exist between parents and offspring, particularly in disadvantaged families. Some young

people leave home of their own will and, sometimes, they are chased from the nest by parents who are completely helpless in the face of their own problems.

Free time activities and recreation also appear to suffer in this milieu. Long sessions in front of the television set replace going out, which has become too expensive. Gathering places have changed. Jobless young people stay away from restaurants and brasseries and frequent, instead, poolrooms and shopping centres. They give up going to sports centres and abandon their former activities.

On the other hand, the majority of these young people have told us they would be happy to work, that they would accept any job we offered them. They did not even speak of good jobs. They desired to work, but and it must be stated categorically, there are no jobs for them, not even the hope of one. As far as establishing a home is concerned, it is easy to understand that this is out of the question.

The Deputy Minister of Social Affairs, M. André Roy, recently reminded us that «anyone capable of working who remains more than two years on social welfare runs the risk of remaining on it for the rest of his or her life because of psychological factors, of acquired habits and of unfavourable prejudices on the part of prospective employers».[22]

Consequently, the situation of young people on welfare and of the youthful unemployed constitutes a social problem of dramatic, if not irreparable significance. Young people who live daily with frustration and hopelessness rapidly acquire a feeling of carelessness.

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22. André Roy, La Presse, 14 August, 1982.

Those who find refuge in passivity and disengagement never again recover the ideals and aspirations so characteristic to youth.

It is, to say the least, tragic to note the clear correlation which is said to exist between these problems and the rapid increase in the rate of suicides among Québec young people, which is becoming one of the highest in the world; at the present time suicides are the cause of 13% of all the deaths of 15 to 19 year olds and 19% of those of persons between the ages of 20 to 29 years.[23] A recent study shows that the highest rate of suicide occurs on the 20 to 24 year age-group. «The whole of the first generation of the Quiet Revolution have become its victims».[24]

The Conseil believes it important to recall the relationship which exists between such phenomena as deviance and poverty.

One specialist in juvenile crime reports: «Young people who have been accustomed to the luxurious life style of our consumer society... now suddenly find themselves deprived of all that their parents can no longer provide, because of a lack of employment or of money... But they have by no means given up their habits of luxury and pleasure and, while some of them may have done so, others, less well advised, take into their own hands the means of satisfying their desires».[25]

This view is shared by various authorities. The study carried out

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23. La Presse, 13 March, 1982, p. A-9.

24. Gilles Lortie, «Dossier: suicide, diagnostic d'un psychiatre». L'actualité, October, 1982.

25. Rémi Dumay, La Presse, 23, August, 1982.

by Gariépy and Leblanc established the relationship that exists between poverty and juvenile delinquency. «In Montreal (...) socio-economic and family circumstances are most significantly related to the distribution of juvenile crime across the region».[26] Another study provides details of unemployment as a factor in delinquency. «Most of the works studied reveal that lack of employment among the 15 to 20 year old group who have left school exposes them to inactivity which, when prolonged, often leads to anti-social behaviour».[27]

Alcohol and drugs occupy an important place in the increase of crimes committed by young people. The phenomena of drug consumption cannot be ignored. Jacques Laverdière comments: «We may venture at least to detect a linking of such conditions as addiction, violence and alcoholism to which people are exposed during their forced inactivity and we know that the one brings on the others».[28]

The Batshaw Committee also confirms the relationship between poverty and juvenile delinquency: «Their main characteristic (problem children) is that their parents lacked the resources required to solve the problems posed by the child. This becomes evident when one observes that the majority of children in the reception centres come from poor families. This is certainly not because the children of the rich are all little saints. It is because their parents are in a position to help them solve their problems».[29]

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26. José Gariépy, Marc Leblanc, Ecologie de l'inadaptation juvénile à Montréal, 1976, p. 4.

27. Marc Leblanc, Louise Biron, Gilles Côté, Louison Pronovost, La délinquance juvénile: son développement en regard du développement psychosocial durant l'adolescence, Montréal, G.R.I.J., 1978.

28. Jacques Laverdière, Etude sur le chômage dans les quartiers de la Basse-ville de Québec in 1979, C.L.S.C. de la Basse-ville de Québec.

29. Ministère des Affaires sociales, Rapport du comité d'étude sur la réadaptation des enfants et adolescents placés en centre d'accueil, 1975, p. 7.

In short, according to all indications the rate of juvenile delinquency has risen greatly in recent years. Such an increase is disquieting.

Statistics provided by the Ministère de la Justice du Québec indicate that there were 30 292 crimes committed in 1978. Crimes against property were the most numerous. There were 10 838 cases of breaking and entry with violence and 11 586 without. Theft accounted for more than half of the cases of juvenile crime. Girls were involved in 6,4%, or 1 939 cases.[30]

In the Montréal Urban Community it would seem that juvenile crime is assuming alarming proportions. In 1980 it increased by 30% over the preceding year. More than 10 000 children and adolescents were hauled before the courts and specialized agencies. Some 5 000 youths were formally arraigned before the juvenile court.[31]

There is no way in which Québec society can permit such a large number of young people to live in poverty. Even less can it assume the enormous economic price involved in helping them to live normal lives. Already, in 1982, Québec has had to spend one and a half billion dollars on social welfare payments.[32] At the present rate of increase in the number of social welfare recipients, this amount will exceed two billion dollars in 1983, without counting the costs of medical treatment and legal actions.

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30. Ministère de la Justice du Québec, Direction générale des greffes, Rapport annuel 1978, C.B.E.S.

31. Rémi Dumay, La Presse, 14 August, 1982, an article by André Pepin.

32. La Presse, 11 September 1982.

Under the title «Unemployment, a Nine Million Dollar Scourge»,[33] Jean Poulain has analysed the cost of unemployment in Québec in 1982. He has calculated the moneys lost by workers and governments, as well as the cost of unemployment insurance payments. In 1982, unemployment insurance payments totalled 4,4 billion dollars in Québec.

The author could have added the loss arising from a drop in production which was reduced by some twenty-one million working weeks. In many cases fewer goods and services were produced. The drop in purchasing power also impoverished the Québec economy. Evaluation of the total loss brought on by unemployment may well double the sum of nine billion dollars established in Jean Poulain's analysis.

As almost half of Québec's unemployed are under twenty-five years of age, it is not hard to appreciate the true value of the deficit resulting from their inactivity. Nevertheless, this situation should have been corrected years ago. One government working paper indicated as early as 1976: «Already, as far as the unemployment of young people is concerned, the seven most industrialized countries established, at the London Summit, jobs for young people as a first priority. In Canada and Québec such a priority should have existed for a long time, because the percentage of jobless young people has always been very high and far greater than that of European countries».[34] This deplorable situation would have been corrected long ago had the funds now required to underwrite unemployment insurance and social welfare payments been used to step up vocational training and to promote job creation.

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33. Jean Poulain, «Unemployment, a Nine Million Dollar Scourge». La Presse, 2 February, 1983, p. B-1

34. Ministère des Affaires sociales, Intervention-jeunesse: esquisse problématique générale et éléments d'orientation d'un programme de prévention, Direction des Services communautaires, service des programmes, mars 1981.

1.8 Dashed Hopes at Work and at School

The fate reserved for young adults may be described in terms of wasted energy and effort, of being fired and socially dependent, and of being sidetracked. Such a situation does not appear fortuitous and may be explained to a great extent in terms of the lack of action over the last few years of those responsible, who were incapable of foreseeing the effects of the economic crisis, particularly on young people.

For many people, however, this situation is more than an accident, it also arises from permanent structural factors. The very notion of work has changed in our society and the school system, like many other social institutions normally responsible for the social and vocational insertion of young people, has experienced enormous problems in adjusting.

The Centre de recherche et de statistiques sur le marché du travail indicates several factors which explain the deterioration in the status of young people.[35] It draws attention also to certain attitudes which explain their difficult insertion into society and the labour market. The study's authors emphasize how little employers are interested in the training of their younger workers; they cite the opinions of owners who questioned the productive value of young people. They draw attention to the distortions that exist between the theoretical training dispensed by the schools and the practical knowledge required on the job.

In the same study, mention is made of the constraints which prevent

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35. Ministère du Travail, de la Main-d'oeuvre et de la Sécurité du revenu, Le marché du travail, Centre de recherche et de statistiques sur le marché du travail, May, 1980.

young people from securing jobs which are controlled or regulated by parity committees or collective agreements. Salary scales are another obstacle. The gap between the hopes of young people and what the job market has to offer them is no negligible factor in their entry into the work force. All these factors must be considered in addition to an important cut in the rate of creation of new positions. It explains, but in no way justifies, the fact that a large number of young people are unable to penetrate the labour market.

But, above and beyond these reasons, there are other obstacles to the hiring of young people. Government has not foreseen, in any methodical way, the integration of young people into the work force. It has not provided appropriate and adequate resources for acquiring that first job. It has been unable to plan, set up and coordinate the organization of the school system, vocational training and job placement, without either contradiction or duplication.

For its part the school system would seem to be in difficulty in continuing to fulfill its role of adapting itself to the very diverse needs of young people, of interesting and motivating them, because it is directly affected by the socio-economic conditions in which families and communities find themselves.

Is not one of the obvious causes of the large number of young people's leaving school its inability to provide adequate instruction for all those who must attend? «The number of young people between the ages 15 and 19 who lack a diploma and will never acquire one in the regular system would be (...) more than 300 000».[36] These young people have

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36. Réginald Grégoire, La formation et l'insertion des jeunes de 15 à 18 ans dans la société: un défi pour toutes les institutions, Ministère de l'Éducation, Service de la recherche, April, 1981, p. 57.

dropped out of school as failures and their personal behaviour has been influenced by this, since they have not been led to realize all their potential.

One reason often invoked to explain dropping out of school is «boredom».[37] The same authors state that «the lower the subjects on the social scale, the greater the chances of their leaving school».[38]

The opinions expressed during our hearings bear out these assertions. The «drop-outs» stated that school had no attraction for them. Others maintained that the schools were for teachers and administrators and that they were denied any responsibility.

Others said they had left after seeing their elders who has finished high school unable to obtain a regular job. Many young boys and girls revealed that they would have continued their studies had they had the impression that this would have made it easier to secure a job. Some among them would have liked to be able to study and work, as do some of their friends enrolled in the Adult Education Services.

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37. Pierre Roberge, Pierre-W. Bélanger, Guy Rocher, Le nombril vert et les oreilles molles: l'entrée des jeunes Québécois dans la vie active dans le second tiers des années 1970, p. 24.

38. Ibid., p. 28.

CHAPTER II - Training for Those Who Have Left School Prematurely

We have identified those groups of young people who live below the poverty line or in misery. These boys and girls are destitute and can barely keep body and soul together.

A very large proportion of them have neither the skills nor the training required to improve their living conditions. They often live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. They do not really enjoy equality of opportunity in the regular school system. The Adult Education Services do not meet their needs, either. Statistics for 1979-1980 indicate that only 1 636 recipients of social welfare payments participated in one or another of the courses in professional or socio-cultural training,[39] whereas there were 512 352 persons receiving such payments.[40]

2.1 Evident needs of training

The Conseil is aware of this situation. It knows that young people in poor economic circumstances need a minimum of training in order to improve their chances of entering the labour market or of leading a normal life. Many young people are also in need of support in order to undertake further studies at this time in their lives, even if they have a tendency to underestimate the advantage of more advanced

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39. Ministère des Affaires sociales, Direction générale de l'aide sociale, La formation des adultes et les bénéficiaires de l'aide sociale, mémoire présenté à la Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes, 12 December, 1980.

40. Bureau de la statistique du Québec, Centre d'information et de documentation, 18 February, 1982.

training or hesitate to invest in education, no matter how indispensable it may be to a better future.

Basic education is preparatory and essential to all those wishing to manage their own lives. For some it is a question of undergoing vocational training or apprenticeship. For others, the fact of having acquired a basic education opens the doors to further studies or to vocational training. The most deprived young people should, in their own interest, enroll in socio-cultural activities responsive to their needs. In this way they may achieve a degree of autonomy and acquire a measure of control over their own social and economic situation.

2.2 Access to Education

Since the beginning of the school reform movement, the accessibility of education has been a primary objective. Unhappily, the evidence demonstrates the incapacity of the weakest pupils to complete secondary school. For a variety of reasons, too large a number have left school prematurely and others have been excluded from the school system. For both groups access to schooling loses all significance. It behooves us to make such a fundamental principle applicable.

For the mass of disadvantaged youth who have abandoned their studies, access to training remains an essential element for any improvement in their situation. As early as 1974 the Conseil declared: «An educational system must provide any disadvantaged citizen access to educational resources on the same basis as the most privileged. This calls for special measures to enable the disadvantaged to exercise this right of access to education».[41]

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41. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Annual Report 1973-1974, p. 111.

At the present time serious and sometimes insurmountable obstacles bar young people with problems from access to general education, vocational training and even from socio-cultural studies.

Educational resources appear to be inaccessible to disadvantaged young people. In fact young social welfare recipients are not even able to meet the costs of registration and of scholarity, however minimal these may be. Many young people, lacking both income and work, are in the same position. All the more reason for their inability to assume the expenses of transportation, clothing, etc., arising from attendance at an educational institution.

In a program of continuing education ways must be found to make training available free of charge to jobless young people and social welfare recipients, according to their needs and with methods adapted to a variety of situations. Young adults who return to school and who lack financial resources should have access to a revised system of loans and bursaries based on the age of the student, rather than on the level of scholarity.

2.3 Adaptable Teaching

In the training of young people who have abandoned their studies too early, it is necessary, if not indispensable, to get away from traditional teaching methods. In order to be compatible with the living conditions of people with problems, the planning of activities must rigourously take cognizance of their needs, expectations, aspirations and experience.

In this context the approach used in adult education appears particularly interesting. Individualized teaching is far removed from the lecture method and is more responsive to the needs and interests of young

people who have experienced repeated failure in the regular system. Close supervision ensures the continuity and quality of learning.

The participation of young adults in their own educational projects is one of the keys to success. The definition of precise objectives and of effective ways of arriving at the desired results may be achieved in discussion with the boys and girls. The capacity and resources of even those with problems should not be underestimated. Their very problems may produce fruitful experiences. Their feeling of self-respect plays an important part in their development.

Any training offered to young people in straitened circumstances should include reference to community development. While they are being helped to solve their personal problems, an opportunity is available to make them aware of the problems of their fellows. In this way they come to feel some responsibility for the future of the collectivity.

2.4 Catching the interest of disadvantaged young people

Young people who have left school prematurely are not in the least ready, psychologically, to return to the regular system in order to acquire the basic skills they need. The same attitude is apparent among the majority of the young unemployed and social welfare recipients.

In order to provide training for these young people, it is necessary to establish a structure which will welcome them and will be able to meet their educational needs. The adult education network meets these criteria and should be capable of absorbing many of these young adults. In addition, its efficiency has been demonstrated and is even the envy of many countries. UNESCO and OECD have commented on its quality and originality. This network includes teachers and counsellors who have accumulated a vast experience in many fields

of adult education. The wealth of its teaching experience is widely well known. The flexibility of its training courses fulfills the expectations of young people. The capability of dispensing vocational training in an institution or on the factory floor is such as to interest future apprentices. The experience in community animation which the services have acquired brings them close to young people with problems.

The Conseil notes with regret that the Adult Education Services are not in a position to admit all the young people who knock at their doors on account of their very limited resources. It is essential that these services receive additional founds in order to enable them to admit a larger number. Young people are waiting for the ministère de l'Education to find the moneys required to provide them with general education and professional training sufficient to enter the labour market.

2.5 Welcome, Information, Guidance and Evaluation

Those organizations which provide training for disadvantaged young people must welcome them warmly. The welcoming and guidance services in adult education give an eloquent example of this: they are renowned for their excellence.

Those in charge must outdo themselves to meet, greet and welcome young people burdened with failure and so gain their confidence. They must take their problems seriously, follow up on interviews and remain as intermediary between the young people and other who may become involved.

Their coordinating function requires that they provide detailed information about training programs. They must promote the value of study, learning and guidance.

One of the first tasks is that of informing young people of the evolution of the labour market in their region. This step is basic. If one wishes to guide young people in the course of their social insertion, it is of little use to direct them towards trades in which there are no job opportunities. On the contrary, they should be directed towards accessible and interesting occupations. The forecasting of needs in trades and occupations is a vital instrument for guidance counsellors. It is basic to the planning of any program of vocational training.

The counsellors should inform the young people about jobs, conditions in the labour market and the training courses. In assisting them to make wise choices they avoid the wasting of irreplaceable human resources. They increase the possibility of their realising their aspirations and of success. Young people who are unemployed or receiving welfare payments are in need of wise counsel.

The role of the counsellors is not limited to that of information regarding courses to be followed; it consists of adequately informing the young people about openings in trades and occupations. How can a young person decide on his or her educational objectives and make a career choice if no one is in a position to indicate the new realities of labour in the milieu, in the region?

Disadvantaged young people need also to be given help in choosing their educational objectives and selecting a trade. The importance of such support is obvious. Such jobless young people or social welfare cases often are unaware of the requirements of the labour market. The majority lack the background needed to select the training and courses which they need if they are to succeed.

The most disadvantaged are those with the greatest need of sound

guidance; adequate services are sorely needed. Vocational guidance counsellors play a decisive role in determining the future of the boys and girls whom they advise.

The welcoming and referral services could influence the guidance and information provided elsewhere in the school system. They provide the young people with the support and information required and encourage a personal approach in order that each one person may draw up a real training project.

All these organizations must finally evaluate precisely what the young people they admit have acquired in terms of training and experience.

In addition to their academic baggage, it is important to assess their attitudes, their experience and the skills acquired outside the school system. In such an evaluation, sight must not be lost of the fact that these young people have grown intellectually since leaving school, since observation, experience with problems and contact with the milieu all contribute to the development of the personality.

If the capacities of comprehension, judgement, and reasoning of those who are to be helped and guided be not exactly evaluated, there is a great risk of offering poor advice.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation recommends:

1. That the Government of Québec provide the adult Education Services the credits required to facilitate and increase access for young adults to admission and guidance services, as well as to the various

educational service currently offered, in order to provide them increased general education and vocational training adequate for their entry into the labour market.

CHAPTER III - Basic Education For Those Who Have Already Left School

Thousands of young Québecers have left school and desire to complete their basic education. A goodly number need a Secondary V Certificate in order to secure employment and realize the importance of acquiring a diploma.

For the most part, these young people either cannot or will not return to the regular school which did not meet their needs. It is therefore, necessary to think in terms of educational resources of a kind far removed from the usual model and of teaching methods in conformity with their life style. If young people with problems perceive that there is a possibility of improving their chances through further training, they will, for the most part, accept the notion of completing their schooling and of obtaining at least a Certificate of Secondary Studies.

Some flexible and promising projects have been established in all too few places to encourage a return to school. As a result of initiatives taken in the regular system, two schools for drop-outs have been set up. At the instigation of some Adult Education Services, several school boards have found ways to offer courses on a part-time basis, financed through the education budget.

3.1 In the regular system

Schools for drop-outs.

In Montréal, l'École Marie-Anne provides a particularly interesting formula. It enrols 700 young people between the ages of 16 and 20 who have been out of school for at least a year. The objective is to enable them to acquire a Secondary V Diploma. Each year consists of two sessions of fifteen weeks. Pupils may follow a maximum of four courses per session while working. The lecture method of teaching is used. Each teacher devotes half a day per week to following up the progress of each pupil. In last year's June Examinations the 200 Secondary V pupils achieved an average mark of 85%, considerably higher than the provincial average. A placement committee finds jobs for those who need them. A resources committee lends money to those in financial difficulty. The students themselves run the cafeteria and participate in the organization of sports.

In Sherbrooke the Centre le Goëland has been opened on the model of Marie-Anne. There is another project planned for the Québec region which should open in the fall of 1983.

In collaboration with the Adult Education Service.

Such programs as «Retour aux Etudes», found in the Jérome-Le Royer, Sault Saint-Louis and Verdun School Commission, merit duplication. For example, in Verdun, young people between the ages of 16 and 21, who have left school, may register at high school and follow courses in the Adult Education Service. Teaching is individualized and this technique pleases young people who have known repeated failure and who now progress at a normal rate. Everything acquired at school is taken into account. A guidance service is available to the

pupils. These former drop-outs write the high school leaving examinations of the Ministère de l'Éducation.

3.2 In the Adult Education Services

Adult education, as offered by school boards, meets the needs of young people in a variety of ways. General education is offered on a full-time basis, in co-operation with the Federal Government. In order to be admitted, young people must have been out of school for at least three years.[42] The material resources for this type of training are, however, very limited and subject to budgetary restrictions.

For all practical purposes, those between the ages of 15 and 18 are eliminated from this program. They need, nevertheless, to continue their studies. Those aged 19 to 25 have difficulty in getting on the lists administered by the Canadian Manpower Centres. Resources are directed towards the «New National Training Program of Canada» which gives priority to vocational training.

As far as part-time general education is concerned, as a result of budget cuts, the funds of the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec are sufficient to provide some 100 000 group-hours to some 15 000 persons; this is clearly inadequate in terms of the immense need. The registration and other fees which the Adult Education Services must demand in order to be self-financing effectively shut out those with limited financial resources.

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42. «Adult: any person no longer legally subject, in the province of residence, to compulsory school attancance», Bill C-115, article 2(1) 22 June, 1982, House of Commons.

In addition, those who are unemployed lose their unemployment insurance payments the moment they enroll in any general education course, since the Canadian Manpower Centres rule that an unemployed person who is studying is no longer available for work. This situation places young people in a dead-end. The education they want is, in fact, inaccessible to them.

3.3 Socio-cultural Education

Young people who are incapable of working, illiterate, handicapped or sick and in financial difficulty have a right to educational services which will help them to develop those abilities indispensable to life in society.

Adult Education Services and other specialized organizations should carry out research in order clearly to identify the skills required by each group. The definition of priority educational objectives would help these people to achieve a greater degree of authonomy. It would make it possible to organize training in terms of real needs. But, the most disadvantaged young people exist in isolation. Psychological barriers prevent their breaching the walls of the schools. A variety of approaches and special techniques are required in order to interest them in educational activities. Such activities should help them to lead more normal lives. These young people have so many common characteristics that it should be possible to prepare specific courses for them.

Training has already enabled the handicapped to cope with some problems of daily life. Courses for the illiterate teach them how to write cheques and to read the names of streets. But, what is being done is not enough and the need is immeasurable. For example, it should be noted Québec counts 316 000 persons for whom reading,

writing, and arithmetic are mysteries.[43] Many thousands of young people can neither read nor write and something must be done for them, urgently.

It is certain that training designed for specific groups would more adequately meet their needs and would, therefore, be useful and very advantageous to them. Surely certain courses offered by Adult Education Services may meet the needs of some young people incapable of working. Classes in literacy, budgeting, consumer education, introduction to law, the use of community resources, could satisfy some young people. But, generally speaking, specific groups are in need of training made to the measure of their problems.

Nevertheless, any attention directed to young people with problems, must not be the cause of any neglect of their regular clientele by the Adult Education Services. The proposal to add to their responsibilities by giving them a priority role as concerns disadvantaged young people is made having in mind the excellence of their educational practices and the motivation of their teachers.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation recommends:

2. That the Government of Québec establish a system of loans and bursaries for young adults with financial problems who, having dropped out of school, decide to enrol full time in order to obtain a Secondary V Certificate;

3. That the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec provide for young adults from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and who are required to

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43. Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes, Apprendre: une action volontaire et responsable, 1982.

complete some basic education courses or certain part time vocational courses, in order to join the workforce, sums of money in addition to their social welfare or unemployment insurance payments such as would permit them to meet the cost of the courses they must follow;

4. That the Ministère de l'Education du Québec increase the resources available for courses in literacy and socio-cultural training offered by various recognized organizations, particularly for young people under 25 years of age.

CHAPTER IV - Vocational Training for those who Have Left School Prematurely

The first concern of this advice is those young people searching for their first job, those lacking education and existing on unemployment insurance benefits or social welfare payments. Québec society must act quickly to offer them special training according to their needs and abilities and give them a better chance of penetrating the labour market.

4.1 Training for work

In a recent exploration of its point of view concerning the Government's proposals for the vocational training of young people, the Conseil suggested modifications whose positive effects may only become apparent in several years. This is no reason not to wonder seriously what remedies may be applied to the difficult situation in which many young people find themselves.

As concerns vocational training in the secondary schools, the Conseil recommended that greater use be made of the educational resources of the world of work. This could come about, particularly, through an apprenticeship in industry of one or more years duration on completion of an introduction to a variety of trades at the high school level.

With regard to those young people who have left school, and whose lack of vocational training places them in a difficult position, there is a need to examine a multitude of measures susceptible of augmenting their chances of obtaining work by the up-grading of their skills. The vocational training as a tradesperson or skilled worker offered by the secondary schools does not, in any way, cover the whole gamut of occupations with clear and special qualifications. It is, therefore, possible to imagine any number of ways better adapted to less conventional careers

in order to break the vicious circle of lack of qualifications (could there be qualification through experience?) and unemployment. Vocational training should be just as accessible to young people who have had some experience of work and unemployment as it is to pupils reaching the end of their secondary studies.

The changes proposed by the Ministère de l'Éducation concerning vocational training, postponing it somewhat (to 17 to 18 years of age, rather than 16 to 17), making it slightly more concentrated (Secondary VI) and providing for a special diploma, at an earlier stage for some pupils, will make young adults who have already joined the workforce, more likely to take advantage of it. At the same time, in its recent advice on vocational training, the Conseil drew attention to the need to provide this type of training at an earlier stage for some pupils.

Practice in many European countries, particularly in Germany[44], demonstrates that the quality of their vocational training, and the concrete collaboration of business in such training, have a positive effect in counteracting the unemployment of young people. These examples should be enough to incite Québec to select this option over the long term. On the other hand, drastic temporary action is required over the short term in order to provide disadvantaged young people access to the skills needed for entry to the workforce. Society must prepare them for their role as productive citizens.

If the maximum number of young people are to have access to adequate vocational training, all of the resources of the collectivity must be mobilized to that end. The state, the municipalities, the school boards, the Adult Education Services, businessmen, unions, professional associations, as well as associations of citizens, must put their shoulders to the wheel in the setting up of satisfactory programs of training.

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44. Jean L'Hérault, La formation professionnelle en Allemagne et au Danemark, ministère de l'Éducation, Direction des politiques et plans, report of mission (28-1601), 1982, p. 34.

In the case of young people who lack the required skills, the Adult Education Services and specialized training centres must provide those who so desire with the knowledge and basic techniques required by a polyvalent workforce. This task of preparing young people to be adaptable in the face of changing methods of production is normally the responsibility of the vocational training sector of the regular school system. Since at least 300 000 boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have left school without acquiring the creative abilities and skills required by the labour market, it is essential that the courses for young adults provide the basic training needed for the mobility, up-grading and in-service training of man (and woman) power. Such a role is transitory, but vital.

The Adult Education Services and other recognized organizations must also become involved in the specialized training of young people with problems. They must be in a position to carry out definite tasks.

Learning a trade is the choice of the majority. This is one element of progress and development, if manpower requirements are considered.

4.2 Training Courses for those with Greatest Need

Many young people enter the workforce with inadequate preparation. They become the lowest paid. Their working conditions are often poor. They do not enjoy the usual fringe benefits. They are the first to be let go. They have little chance of advancement.

These young people make little noise. Each day they carry out duties which are humble, but necessary. They may wish, however, to do something else and they should be given access to the required training. Training courses, which they might take while working, should be set up in order for them to be able to secure more lucrative positions and to guarantee them a brighter future. Otherwise, they will rarely attain

a level of skills and autonomy which will enable them to adjust to the requirements of a changing labour market. Hence, training in skills, other than those related to their present jobs, is absolutely essential.

4.3 Interesting Experiments in Collaboration between Education and Labour

Close collaboration has been established here in Québec between the Adult Education Services and those responsible in industry for the implantation of a variety of courses. Such collaboration should be exploited in what must be done for young people. Four programs exist at the moment.

Nearly half of Québec's school boards offer vocational training sessions in industry. These enable adults enrolled in vocational courses to familiarize themselves with the world of work, either by providing them with a practical opportunity to apply the skills they have acquired, or to pick up new ones which can only be offered on the job. Obviously, such sessions are supervised.

Pre-employment training sessions exist in a third of Québec's school boards to introduce women, in particular the handicapped, those on social welfare and adults who have been away from the job for prolonged periods, to the labour market. Such sessions occur in two stages, supervised by the Adult Education Services. Some 1 200 persons participated in them in 1982-1983.

In 1982-1983 some 10 000 to 12 000 adults received on-the-job training. In collaboration with employers the Adult Education Services developed courses, provided supervision and issued certificates.

Finally the Adult Education Services enters into contracts for on-the-job training with industries. They provide the resource persons according

to the employers' needs and are paid directly by the company involved.

Such special initiatives on the part of the Adult Education Services, as well as the expertise resulting from them, open the door to promising possibilities for the young people of Québec, if only they might be applied more widely. If only the Federal Government, the main source of funds for vocational training, and the Government of Québec, both of which have given strong support to certain resolutions of the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation concerning alternation of work and study, would make such principles part of their own policies.

The introduction of alternating working with studying.

The lack of job preparation of so many young people is an invitation to Québec to set up a program of alternating work and study. In order to bring this about, close collaboration is required between the schools and industry.

Through the experience of working, young people learn, in a practical way, how to do a useful job, and better understand the value of the training provided. Such sessions make what has been learned at school more applicable. They encourage contacts with workers and interest in community affairs. In the face of practical problems, young people discover a new motivation to acquire new skills, which they can do immediately.

The large number of boys and girls who have left school with insufficient training calls for attempts to develop a method of vocational training which will prepare these young people to hold a job.

The alternation of work and study, by establishing a new relationship between the school and the job, creates an equilibrium between theory and practice. It would appear to be the formula best adapted to the needs of the young people with whom we are concerned.

Some Conclusive Experiments

In a number of countries, programs which provide systematic studies, on the one hand, and on-the-job experience on the other, have demonstrated their worth. They are the basis for the competence of manpower in the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, the German Democratic Republic, Sweden, Japan...

For example in the Federal Republic of Germany, the various forms of vocational training embody the complementarity of institutional training and practical instruction in industry. Some large concerns even operate their own schools. The employers pay the student a training salary. In 1979, of 2,6 million secondary school pupils, 1,4 million were enrolled in technical schools[45]. The results are conclusive. The quality of German products is recognized world-wide. It is in such countries that there is the lowest gap between the highest and lowest paid workers. The rate of unemployment of skilled young workers between the ages of 18 and 22 is only 3,2%.

In Denmark, almost 50% of tenth year students are enrolled in vocational courses. The system of alternating working with studying is applied. The student receives a salary which increases with each year of apprenticeship. The school curriculum is developed with the help of those involved in a given sector. The value of its skilled labour force has contributed to the country's industrial power.

The education - work formula has shown itself to be of particular interest to young people who find themselves outside both the school and the labour market, since by providing practical training while working, it facilitates their becoming part of the workforce in a concrete fashion. It was with this in mind that France, in September, 1982, launched a vast program offering «a possibility of vocational and social insertion to young people

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45. Jean L'Hérault, op.cit.

aged from sixteen to eighteen years who have left school without having benefitted from vocational training and who have not been able to find a job»[46]. 150 000 young French people were then unemployed. «The declared objective is very ambitious because it involves offering, for the coming school year, worthwhile solutions to a hundred thousand young people from sixteen to eighteen years of age»[47].

The principles are clearly identified. «Alternating training sessions constitute an overall pedagogic project which brings together, in the same procedure, periods of general and theoretical instruction dispensed by an approved training organization under contract, with periods of practical and broad on-the-job training. Two-way co-ordination is established between these suitably balanced sequences»[48].

This policy statement followed an urgent report which the Prime Minister of France requested of M. Bertrand Schwartz in September, 1981. The latter stated in his report that pedagogic alternation is a means of battling against inequalities, an element of motivation and of guidance for young people, a link between training and application, and a factor of insertion into vocational life and of continuing education[49].

4.4 Limited Resources to Meet Enormous Needs

Despite their great value, in Québec opportunities for the vocational training of adults at the factory level are at the moment limited and almost inacessible to young adults who have an urgent need of such training.

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46. Actualités Sociales Hebdomadaires, no. 300, 3 April, 1982, p. 18.
47. Ibid, p. 14.
48. Ministère de la Formation professionnelle, France, circular no 556, 8 February, 1982.
49. Bertrand Schwartz, L'insertion sociale et professionnelle des jeunes, Report to the Prime Minister, September, 1981.

The Federal and Provincial Governments have signed an agreement, according to which «26 400 residents of Québec enrolled in community colleges or other such institutions»[50] will receive allocations to enable them to follow courses of general and vocational studies. The Direction Générale de l'Education des Adultes informs us that the sum of 64 183 000$ will be devoted to these two types of training in 1983-1984.

How many young people between the ages of 15 and 24 will have any chance of being accepted for enrolment in this plan concerning the whole field of technology? The courses encourage training in trades where there is a lack of skilled workers, according to Canada-wide requirements, in those sectors of the economy which are expanding. They will, thus, not be accessible to young Québecers, especially those with the least schooling, since most of the specialized courses are offered at the college level.

In addition, in order to be eligible for this project (FMPMS), applicants must «not have attended school regularly during a period of twelve consecutive months»[51]. This condition may be abrogated if the Canadian Manpower and Immigration Commission, «feels that the need for qualified personnel in a trade so requires»[52].

Boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 16 are eliminated. Those aged 17 to 24 must register at a Canadian Manpower Centre. If their names happen to be selected from the avalanche of applications from those older than they, they may then apply for admission to a training institution, usually an Adult Education Service. For some courses, there are long waiting lists. For example, in telecommunications, the waiting period is about two and a half years; for many trades, it varies from six to eighteen months. Accessibility of this nature has the appearance of being somewhat distant and does not offer any solution to present

50. La Presse, 28 october, 1982: Le Soleil, 28 October, 1982.
51. Bill C-115, article 4, para. 1 (3) House of Commons, 22 june, 1982
52. Ibid., article 4, para. 2

problems, particularly in the eyes of young people. There can be no doubt of the need to broaden the criteria of accessibility to these courses and to make them available to the large number of young people who are excluded from the schools and who are ill prepared to enter the job market.

4.5 On-the-Job Training

Boys and girls with no skills to offer and less interest in returning to school are looking for work. Accustomed, for the most part, to repeated academic failure, they make up a clientele which would be interested by on-the-job training. In this way they could acquire some skills. The operation of some machines requires only a few hours of instruction, other jobs call for weeks, and sometimes months, of training. Generally speaking such on-the-job training courses are of interest to young people.

Specialized training for a specific task varies in quality from one employer to another. Content is not the same everywhere. Moving from one company to another is not always easy. Proof of this is evident in the difficulties in finding a new job experienced by those who have been laid off.

The governments, which provide grants to industries in so many ways should exert more pressure to have them better train their employeers. For example, supplementary training courses, prepared by the Adult Education Services or other organizations, might be offered to employees. Such training would round out the rudimentary instruction provided on the factory floor or in the office.

4.6 Learning a Trade Through Apprenticeship

The apprenticeship system, in its traditional sense, has proved its worth in the countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation

and Development. It is an important element of vocational training in those trades which are learned for the most part «on-the-job». In most European countries, all trades are subject to regulations and the requirements for apprenticeship are defined. Levels of competence are laid down for all trades.

In the Québec workforce apprenticeships, varying in length from 2 000 to 10 000 hours, are the rule in the construction industry. Only a few other trades are subject to the same rules. Automobile mechanics and hairdressing are the responsibility of parity committees and conditions of access to the trade are defined by decrees. The printing and aviation industries have the best structured apprenticeship systems.

There are industrial sectors which could profit from an apprenticeship system in terms of the acquisition of highly skilled workers, since it opens the way to the development of new trades.

Apprenticeship remains one of the best ways of training workers. It provides unskilled workers with the means to acquire the competence needed for personal development. It facilitates their adaptation to technological change by means of vocational training and such learning experiences should be made available to disadvantaged young people.

Apprenticeship provides an efficient way of up-grading manpower, of improving technical skills and of adjusting to changes in the economy. For all of these reasons the State should contribute to its funding and assure the quality of the training it offers. Unions and employers have a common responsibility at all stages in the training of workers: content, norms, finance, evaluation... There are some areas where the Adult Education Services could be of assistance in the development of courses and the learning process.

4.7 Getting a Job

Nevertheless, in order to be of value, on-the-job training courses and systems of apprenticeship must bring young people to the point where there is a real possibility of their securing employment. It is, therefore, a matter of priority to find ways in which the various obstacles to employment, whether union restrictions or other regulations may be smoothed out: seniority, quotas, minimum wage... Further, it is urgent that new ways be found to integrate young people into a work force that would now appear to be closed to them for long time to come, whether this calls for work sharing, or whatever. It is the responsibility of those in authority in the work place to examine all of the possibilities. They are essential if the educational actions proposed in this document are to be effective. Without them any effort to improve the vocational qualifications of young people risk being out-dated and useless.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation recommends:

5. That the Government of Québec, in association with its social partners, examine, develop and promote various types of vocational training adapted to the needs and requirements of young adults;

6. That, with this in mind, the Government of Québec encourage and promote, among other methods, the alternation of work and study in the vocational training of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who have left school and are unable to secure employment;

7. That, the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec provide training allowances where necessary, in addition to their social welfare or unemployment insurance payments, for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are available for work, but unemployed, who wish to enrol in a work study program, in order to assist them to meet expenses resulting from such training;

8. **That, the Government of Québec, with its social partners (employers and unions) study various formulae to facilitate the entry of young people into the labour market (work-sharing, part-time...) and the lifting of restrictions, both regulatory and union, which impede their vocational insertion.**

CHAPTER V - Improving the Academic Perseverance and Citizenship Training of Young People in the Schools

One cannot discuss, as we have done, the necessity of the far too many young people who have left school prematurely returning to their studies, without also facing up to the question of their having dropped out in the first place. This plague plays a major part in the deterioration of the state in which these young people find themselves. It certainly places them in a weaker condition vis-à-vis other young people who have a better foundation upon which to build their future.

According to the testimony of these young persons, or of others interested in their problems, «the school belongs to the others». They left because they felt looked down upon and incapable of success. In some cases the school encouraged them to go (the push-out).

Ill-prepared for work, they seldom find the job they covet. Once out of school, they are no one's particular responsibility. For the manpower representative they are one file among many. Those least able to help themselves become social welfare cases.

The history of the disadvantaged young adult begins, then, with the school and the number of drop-outs is too great to be ignored. It is essential that those responsible for education set themselves the task of finding more adequate means of meeting the needs of pupils on the verge of abandoning their studies and of «closing the tap» on dropping out.

5.1 Corrective Measures are Needed

The Conseil has already submitted on a number of occasions, its advices concerning secondary education. It notes with regret that, even though the majority of young people obtain a Diploma of Secondary Studies, far too many of them still do not complete High School. In the present

opinion, it again draws attention to several ways in which the schools could provide everyone with that absolutely essential basic education and put an end to the phenomenon of dropping out.

It is appropriate to recall the thoughts of the Ministre de l'Education: «As far as drop-outs are concerned everyone knows that everything possible has not yet been tried. Many teachers have understood this, and with the help of exceptional methods and efforts, have succeeded in interesting young people, whom others had declared to be hopeless. Here again it is necessary that the problem be identified at an early date and that corrective measures be applied in time»[53].

These words imply the development of a means of discouraging early departures from the school system. Teachers have told us that «the child of fourteen is the product of events and his or her school career is determined by the age of 9». The Ministère de l'Education must carry out research concerning the phenomenon of dropping-out among young people and take appropriate corrective measures.

Without wishing to turn the secondary education system of Québec upside down, the situation must be corrected. In the opinion of many of those who have spoken to us, it should be possible to develop more flexible teaching methods, better adapted to the special needs of young people at each stage in their school career such as would prevent their falling behind and the repeated failure, which are so often the cause of dropping out. Further, it is essential that potential drop-outs be identified early, in order to provide them with the support required for successful studies.

5.2 Some Important Experiments

The Conseil has followed with interest several particularly significant experiments in the educational community. In many ways these are part of

53. Ministère de l'Education, Technical and Vocational Education for Young People, Proposals for Revival and Renewal, 1982.

the normal teaching task and are attempts to meet the particular needs of young people with educational problems. Dropping out of school rarely occurs fortuitously, or by accident. It often follows upon a long series of disappointments and failures. The increase in the number of drop outs gives us cause to pose serious questions concerning the capacity of the school system to respond to the real needs of young people.

Flexible and adaptable formulae.

When considered in the context of today's pressure to make the Régime Pédagogique uniform and to cut the services available to young people, the experimental program carried out at the polyvalente Le Boisé in Victoriaville is very interesting. For several years this school has tried to identify the needs of young people and to find pedagogic formulae which would meet such requirements. One of the results are «cultural workshops» (ateliers de culture), by means of which pupils in the Long Vocational Course, generally known for their disinterest in French, are stimulated and motivated to learn. Two subjects such as French and Social and Personal Development are taught as one. Mastery of French assumes importance and significance as a means of passing on practical knowledge. Such courses also lead to the involvement of pupils in community activities.

After having analysed the educational requirements of Short Vocational pupils, the school decided to adopt the individualized courses in French and Mathematics, drawn up by the Adult Education Services. These courses, supplemented by close teacher supervision, enable these so-called «poor» pupils to pass the same exams as their fellows in the regular course and to assume real responsibility for their own development. These young people can look forward to moving into the Long Vocational Course and to progressing normally in their studies.

The teachers and administrators of this school make up a team which is particularly aware of the needs of young people, these being that of learning something of significance, and of feeling wanted, supported and responsible in a school which is a part of the whole community.

In the opinion of the Conseil, the Ministère de l'Education should take steps to create conditions favourable to such experiments, which are all too rare at the moment in our school system.

Other, more limited experiments, apply to the educational support provided for young people. One such is being carried out at Ecole Emile-Nelligan, in Montréal. This school houses a large number of «deviant» pupils from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Three animators from Boscoville are permanently assigned to work with special class teachers, educational consultants and other staff members. Their common aim is to rehabilitate delinquent pupils, or those on the way to becoming such. There is continuous follow-up of the pupils' progress, as well as close liaison with the local community.

Another project is of the same order, an attempt to find appropriate corrective measures. A Director of Student Services in a regional school board told us of the steps he takes when a pupil leaves school or is expelled. He places the pupil in another school and sees that he, or she, is well received in a new environment. The result of his efforts are promising: more than half of the young people so transferred complete their secondary studies. In such cases, it is possible to envision the transfer of pupils between school boards, accompanied by grants to defray the costs of their room and board and transportation.

Early Diagnosis

It is not possible to place too much stress on the diagnosis of the problems and academic failures of young people. At Ecole les Compagnons-de-Cartier

at Sainte-Foy a very effective method has been found to enable Secondary One teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of pupils at the time of their enrolment and better to meet the needs of the weakest ones. In the final analysis, every high school should have a program for the prevention of dropping out involving the use of such diagnostic techniques as that represented by «L'Ecole ça m'intéresse».

These various experiments demonstrate ways in which potential drop-outs may be kept in the regular system. The innovations tried in such situations show that it is possible to up-grade the schooling of the many young people who leave school without a diploma. There is no doubt that such experiments feed on their own creativity. Too much time should not be allowed to pass before they are applied in other cases with the same problems.

Training in Citizenship

Today's secondary schools should place greater emphasis on such objectives as making learning a living experience and teaching more down to earth, and providing young people with a background of citizenship and an understanding of economic forces. There follows a description of several routes to this end which seem significant in the context of the advice.

The formula of Junior Achievement in the school milieu leads to an understanding of economic realities. There are already 67 Junior Achievement groups in operation in secondary schools and cégeps. Twenty students set up a company and elect their Board of Directors as well as their managers. They are assisted by three businessmen, as advisors. At their second meeting, the young people decide what they will produce and sell. Each receives a salary. At the end of the year the business is wound up and a financial statement is presented at a shareholders' meeting. The shares are redeemed, either with dividends, or at loss. The success or

failure of the enterprise is analysed. Pupils are enthralled by such a concrete experience.

The initiative involved in Junior Achievement may also be applied to the setting up of a co-operative. There is little difficulty in adapting the formula to the structure of a co-operative. This would be an excellent way to teach, and to have pupils experience, the principles of co-operative effort.

Last year, the Conseil emphasized in an opinion the importance of co-operation in school as a part of the learning process. It recognized that «all too often the school develops the values of competition and personal achievement. Nevertheless, the values inherent in co-operation form the heart of citizenship»[54]. It recommended the creation of student co-operatives in order for them to have the concrete and enriching experience of co-operation»[55].

Such experiments should be duplicated, encouraged and supported by the Ministère de l'Education in order to stimulate greater adaptation of the schools to their pupils and cut down on the number of drop-outs.

5.3 Useful Practices in Other Countries

The Ministère de l'Education should also take a leaf from the book of useful practices in other countries.

In Denmark, the course of study is the same for all pupils until tenth year. «However, pupils who run into problems are closely watched and may at anytime be removed from regular classes for special instruction in those subjects which they find difficult. Once they have caught up

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54. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation: Education for co-operation; a Model of Development in Popular Education, January 1982, p. 8.

55. Ibid., p. 8.

they return to their regular class»[56]. Here is yet another way of dealing with the difficult problem of repeated failure which leads to leaving school early.

Permitting students to attend school on a part-time basis can keep in school many of those who would otherwise leave. In Germany, a system of part-time instruction is available, up to the age of eighteen, for those pupils who cannot attend school fulltime[57].

The system of alternate sessions of work and study, common in many countries (Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden...), is one that holds the attention and interest of young people who have little taste for intellectual pursuits alone. Such an option could be offered young people as soon as they begin to show signs of leaving school. The experiments listed make no pretence at being exhaustive. They are basic, nevertheless, to our discussions and recommandations.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation recommends:

9. That, the Ministère de l'Education du Québec encourage and support with adequate grants:

   - the implantation of structures and methods which are more flexible and better adapted to the needs of young people attending secondary school;

   - Programs of prevention and educational support required by young people who are apt to leave school;

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56. Jean L'Hérault, op.cit., p. 39
57. Ibid.

- grants to cover the costs of room and board and transportation in the case of pupils whose transfer to another school is conducive to their continuing their studies;

- experiments at the school level in training in citizenship;

10. That the schools increase all aspects of their collaboration with social organizations in order to persuade potential drop-outs to persevere in their studies;

11. That the schools, in collaboration with the Adult Education Services and other organizations involved, make greater use of the course in Introduction to Economic Life, as it concerns co-operation, with all pupils, and help in the setting up of student co-operatives, in order that co-operative values be carried over into the community when they leave school.

CHAPTER VI- Initiatives in the Taking on of Responsibility, Mutual Assistance and Social Involvement by Young People

For many years the Commission on the Education of Adults has looked with favour on those forms of association which protect and show respect of the disadvantaged and, by means of which individuals, by coming together and pooling their knowledge and skills, develop their personal autonomy while at the same time, making a contribution to society, as a whole.

The difficult situation in which young people find themselves today gives rise to significant and courageous initiatives, in an attempt to find solutions to the problems which they face. The Commission is aware of these experiments. They are born of the initiative of the young people themselves or of that of interested parties working among them (educators, social workers, members of religious orders...). They sometimes fill a void left by more generally recognized institutions and their aim is the betterment of young people in terms of their community, vocational and social integration.

6.1 Alternative Places of Learning

The Centre Mariebourg in Montréal North shelters young people classed as having socio-emotional problems.

Some of them spend between thirty and thirty-five hours per week in the institution. The Centre concentrates on general behaviour. In this context academic studies are seen as one means among others for the development of socialization. Social integration may come about in a number of ways. When their behaviour pattern shows improvement, the young people return to their regular secondary school classes fulltime. Others spend part of their time at the Centre, the rest in school. Some of them receive training at the Centre interspersed with on-the-job sessions in industry. It costs 1 800$ annually to keep a young person

at the Centre, as opposed to 35 000$ in a Centre d'accueil.

Another such initiative merits attention. At Saint-Laurent-du-Galichan, in Abitibi, an educational farm takes in groups of fifteen young people for periods of ten months. These have dropped-out of school and are really helpless. Nevertheless, the group has completed the construction of an education centre. They take part in sports, produce plays and participate in the usual farm activities. They do woodwork, leather-work and enamelling on leather. They make windows and furniture. In order to be self-supporting, they sell their own products. At the end of their time at the farm, one third of the young people go back to school, another third join the labour market, while the remainder try to find jobs. But all of them grow in self-respect through having lived together at close quarters. Without this experience they would all join the ranks of the irretrievable.

6.2 The Taking in of Responsibility by Young People

No one has yet found a better formula than youth movements for the rounding out of education. Projects which respond to their needs and system of values bring out their and our enthusiasm and generosity. There are not enough initiatives of this nature. They should be increased in a variety of forms from one community to another, from one village to another. The involvement of young people in the activities of dynamic associations, which they run themselves, is one way of building up their self-esteem and of showing what they can do.

The members of the Commission for Adults have visited a number of youth groups. The young people run their own show. They develop a sense of fraternity. It is a form of self-training and self-education through action.

Mention must be made of the importance of current attempts to bring all youth groups into an umbrella organization, as well as the growing significance of IMAJ (Initiative d'un mouvement d'animation jeunesse) as a spokesperson for young people. Further, the Conseil has followed with great interest the drawing up of a project for the community involvement of students by the Rassemblement des Associations Etudiante Universitaires (RAEU). There is no doubt that such initiatives contribute to solidarity among young people, to the development of a common awareness of problems and encourage real efforts to assist those with the greatest problems. The Youth Summit, to be held in the Summer of 1983, will provide young people with a public platform from which to describe their problems and the solutions which appeal to them.

Other groups have sprung up in recent months. For example «L'Association pour la défense des droits sociaux» which has come to the assistance of recipients of social welfare benefits between the ages of 18 and 30. The «Front commun des assistés sociaux du Québec» includes 2 000 members in some thirty associations and is seeking an increase in social welfare payments. The «Mobilisation contre la misère» demands a better deal for young welfare recipients. «Carrefour Optimiste Jeunesse» has opened a hostel for young people in Montréal's Hochelaga district.

Young people have set to work in many ways in order to improve their living standard. There are a variety of projects in existence, such as «Le Mouvement Action-Travail» and «Intégration-Jeunesse 15-18» which we found of great interest.

The activities of many associations have a training component and are worthwhile. Generally speaking, their membership is relatively low; because of this, their activities lack vitality and their scope is limited. Such were our impressions following our meeting with the Fédération des Jeunes Agriculteurs, the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique, the Boy Scouts Federation of Québec, the Canadian Girl Guides and the

Jeune Chambre de Montréal.

6.3 Services which Helps and Shelter Young People

We have also had the opportunity to observe the activities of various C.L.S.C. and «Maisons des Jeunes». Their preventive programs on juvenile problems will bring about changes, in the near future, in the too negative attitude of the general public concerning problem children. Their approach to the problems of young people is far from traditional: the young people run their own affairs, instead of being directed. In the same field, we have taken note of the activities of the «Bureau de Consultation-Jeunesse». Action is based on concrete problems: housing, prostitution, social services, employment, food, information on rights, drugs...

Our visit to the Service Saint-Denis led to our understanding that youths in transition houses need an income, but they also require support along their road to autonomy.

Young people in difficulty with family problems, or who are addicted to drugs need a place in which to meet. The «Cafés Chrétiens» are made up of thirty or more volunteers of whom some ten are musicians or animators. As a group they attempt to provide some human feeling in such meeting places. Some busy themselves with plays, the others extend a welcome. Each evening subjects for thought and discussion are suggested to the young people who frequent the «Café». In this way, unemployed youth and those receiving social welfare payments, with the help of the other young people, get a taste of what life is all about. Too much stress cannot be placed on the importance to young people of their having a meeting place where they may discuss the essential nature of life, for some the dimension is spiritual, for others moral.

Among such activities, the self-help organizations set up in the parishes of Sainte-Monique-des-Saules, Saint-Malo and Saint-Rédempteur in the

Québec region are worthy of mention. Many priests encourage projects of social insertion. They solicit funds in order to make interest free loans. They are prepared to endorse notes in order that young people may borrow money from financial institutions.

The role played by the Adult Education Services in community activities must also be mentioned. In 1980-1981, the Services supported 649 such projects. Many disadvantaged young people participated in such activities. To be specific, ten projects focussed on the needs of youth.[58]

6.4 Projects Involving Job Creation and Training Through Work

Some projects have their origin in financial assistance provided by government. The coming together of young people in such programs helps them on the way to their vocational insertion. Of the hundreds of projects in existence, five were visited. The «Service 15-20» mainly directs a program of assistance in the creation of local employment opportunities. «Recyclage Saint-Edouard» is an exercise in community affairs. Through one program «PACLE» a service for the recycling of glass, wood and paper is offered. «Elan Laval» has set up a workshop in which young people, by learning carpentry and furniture-making try to find permanent jobs. «Récupération Bois-Francs» collects paper throughout the region and resells it. A dozen young people have jobs there. It has almost become financially self-supporting. The «Fondation Ressources-Jeunesse» differs from the other models. This non-profit organization is administered by ten businessmen. The moneys collected are invested in job creation projects. At the present time, «Project P.A.T.» involves a dozen young people offering mechanical services. The young people learn how to work and find jobs at the end of their training session.

The C.L.S.C. Basse-ville, in Québec, has set up a program to encourage the creation of jobs by and for young people. Its objective is to give young

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58. Ministère de l'Education de Québec, Extracto du système informatique, 3 November, 1981.

people a sense of entrepreneurship, to complete their training through work and to bring about real local collaboration of education, businessmen, and community leaders in order to encourage young people to become useful citizens.

During our meetings with those involved in working with young people we could not but become aware of the dynamism and deep convictions of these people, who keep track neither of their time nor of their energies. These volunteers in community activities fill real a gap. They provide young people with new ideas which add to their education. They carry on creative activities of a truly educational nature. In short, they show the way to others in assisting young people to become better citizens.

6.5 Projects in Co-operative Action

The importance of co-operative activities among young people cannot be minimized. The movement known as «Les Jeunes de Pointe-Saint-Charles» provides us with an eloquent example. It groups together some 150 unemployed persons and social welfare recipients. Adult volunteers are also involved. The young people learn to work according to the co-operative formula. Their objective is the opening of a «Café». They have organized «lavethons», «roulethons», auctions and a flea market. Members of the district participate enthusiastically. According to the young people involved in the project, the co-operative formula encourages them to assume responsibilities and answers their need of mutual assistance, solidarity and collaboration. It enables them to become involved in the community, to develop their business sense and to realize their potential.

In a world whose principal economic objectives are dividends and profits, the co-operative movement stresses the predominance of the common good over personal gain. It brings people together in the face of need in a generous and humane relationship. It enables young people with serious financial and social problems to pool their resources and to work together.

Young people who become involved in the creation of a co-operative become responsible for their own education. Could any teacher stimulate greater interest and participation? The co-operative is one of the best schools for the development of personal autonomy for young people. At one time, it develops the sense of solidarity, of mutual help and of shared responsibility. It is an incomparable arena for learning and testing.

The co-operative which brings together a number of young people provides a means, among other things, where by they may find solutions to their problems and freedom in a common effort. If they form a productive co-operative, they become their own bosses. No one seeking a management position can find a better formula. In their co-operative, the young people have the double status of co-owner and employee.

This formula has shown its worth in the Scandinavian countries. In Québec, it is a tool which has not been adequately exploited. It is too easy to forget that the small co-operatives of yesteryear were the basis of the socio-economic progress of Québec's farmers. We have omitted mention of many experiments which merit publicity and which prove that in 1983 anything is possible for young people who wish to improve their lot.

A few examples will serve to illustrate projects of which young people are capable. In the small parish of Guyenne, a production co-operative is now the largest producer of greenhouse coniferous plants in Québec. The workers co-operative in Manseau grows tomatoes and flowers under glass. The Cooperative de Saint-Emile-d'Auclair cultivates potatoes and exploits a sugar bush, produces oils and manages feeding lots, the Cooperative de Maniwaki runs an ambulance service. In Valleyfield, a cooperative collects cardboard, newspaper, glass and fine paper for recycling.

There are some fifty workers cooperatives which could have been created by and for young people. Their entrepeneurship could be applied in all

sectors of activity, in the renovation industry, handicrafts, bookkeeping, toymaking, gardening under glass, and sociocultural affairs. By studying local needs for recreation or services a group of young people could set up a cooperative providing recreational or other services, or products which would provide an income. Such concrete and valuable initiatives in cooperation merit whole-hearted community backing. The young people would very soon develop self-confidence and their project take on unforeseen significance.

It must be said that the cooperative formula is no panacea for all problems. But, for a large number of young people, it remains an ideal method of personal training and social insertion.

6.6 Projects in Community Action

Young people without jobs are prepared to become involved in community activities. They have ideas and desire to put them to the test. When given responsibility they carry out activities which profit the entire collectivity. They are capable of putting their heads together and of producing programs of community development. Naturally, technical assistance is required in some cases, but it must be flexible and available on demand. It receives ready acceptance if those offering it are competent.

The Mouvement Québécois des Chantiers must be singled out. This organization groups boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty years. For a period of two months, some fifteen young people work on a community project. They receive food and lodging. Each project costs 10 000$, including the salaries of the monitors who supervise the operation. The young people acquire new skills and undergo an enriching experience. For example, at Matane a building and the equipment of the Auberge de Jeunesse were renovated. At Cabano, an observation tower was built on the mountain and a building was restored. At Québec, an archeological dig was carried on and a Maison de jeunes was opened in Vanier.

At Sherbrooke, a cottage was built for an impoverished family. All the young people who have participated in a «Chantier» leave having gained new insights into what living is all about.

Young people may become involved in countless projects. Home repairs, the restoration of an old manor house and the renovation of a district are not beyond the realm of possibility.

Some young people may even be interested in taking up handicrafts, an activity which seems to be on its way to oblivion. They may work at woodlot management and reforestation. The organization of places of interest to tourists is not an impossible task. The energy and efforts of young people may be channelled into a multiplicity of projects.

Those who are jobless can cultivate community gardens, clean up water courses, seed lakes with fish, work in recreation centres, raise mink or rabbits, operate a fish farm, participate in communal work projects, tear down slums, create green spaces... Others prefer social activities. There is no end of possibilities. They vary from lending a hand to senior citizens to providing assistance to youngsters whose need is even greater.

But, one of the first steps which must be taken is that of providing a place for meetings and for action in common. A large number have expressed the wish that a youth centre be made available to them. Getting together and talking in informal surroundings, which they have organized themselves, is very often a useful safety value.

Any activity undertaken by young people in the community should have an educational component which will, in time, contribute to their insertion into society and the labour market. Young people develop skills through practical experience. They acquire new ones. The experience of working gives them confidence. New behaviour patterns emerge and replace prejudices of long standing.

The development of self confidence, among young people involved in community projects based on local needs depends, to a very large extent, on the provision of adroit, and discrete, support. All the community organizations, from the municipality to the Adult Education Services, should supply discrete, but continuing support.

It is in this context that the Conseil welcomes with high hopes the project «Action Jeunes Volontaires» which the government of Québec announced recently. The project has as its goals «useful and valuable» social objectives, and enables young people to participate in community development.

The young people receive a salary for participating; the experience they acquire will, eventually, be recognized by the Ministère de l'Education. Thus every project «must include a significant training component leading to a certificate of participation»[59].

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation recommends:

12. That the Adult Education Services be given a mandate to encourage the organization of youth groups and to provide them with educational support and material according to their needs;

13. That the Adult Education Services be given a mandate to help and support the activities of young people who become involved in community projects:

    - By providing, with the collaboration of community organizations, training activities of a vocational, general or socio-cultural nature in accordance with the specific needs of the young people engaged in various projects;

59. Secrétariat général du Conseil Exécutif, Action jeunes volontaires: une participation des jeunes au développement du Québec, Québec, March, 1983.

- by establishing a means whereby the skills and experience acquired by the young people engaged in any such project may be recognized;

14. That the organizations concerned involve themselves in promoting the values and principle of co-operation among young people with problems and encourage them to establish their own cooperative and, in so doing enable them to assume responsibility and to complete their personal and social training through such activities;

15. That the Government of Québec organize a widespread campaign of popular education to encourage the establishing of community projects which aid in the social and vocational insertion of young people.

CHAPTER VII - The Necessary Concertation of those Involved

The extent and gravity of the problems facing Québec's young people require that all those involved work closely together. Wide ranging, yet diversified and complementary measures are called for. The shotgun approach will never produce tangible results. The coordination and coherence of the various measures designed to encourage a better social and vocational insertion for young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four is of major importance.

7.1 At the National Level

The lack of coherence in the actions undertaken by the governments of Canada and of Québec clearly demonstrates the necessity of on-going concertation between them. In the development of vocational training and job creation programs, collaboration is carried out more in terms of constitutional jurisdiction than according to the needs of the young people. Coordination of efforts for maximum efficiency is one of the priority conditions of a global policy to encourage the social insertion of young people.

In Québec, it is also necessary «to create order among the numerous provincial authorities in the field of vocational training. More than ten general directorates of the Ministère du travail et de la Main-d'oeuvre, and involved in vocational training».[60]

Cacophony is the basic characteristic of the job creation drama. The administration of programs for the creation of temporary jobs is shared by as many as seven Québec ministries and organizations. The Ministère de la Main-d'oeuvre et de la Sécurité du Revenu alone administers the back to work program (PRET), the job ticket for young people with diplomas,

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60. Socio-Economic Conferences, Québec 2332, 11,02.

the Manpower Bureaus (SEMO), and such programs as Partage du Travail and Chantier-Québec. An experimental program for the creation of community jobs (PCEC) is also under way. The same is true of programs such as Relais and Création d'emplois temporaires (PCET).

Young people have trouble making their way, and adults lose their bearings in the labyrinth of federal and provincial programs for vocational training. The national structures are too bureaucratic and difficult of access. The oft promised solution of a «single wicket» would facilitate the efforts of young people with problems. This would mean that there would be only one telephone number and a receptionist capable of guiding callers to a competent advisor and an appropriate program.

The national concertation which establishes norms and lays down regulations should also move toward decentralization to local and regional communities. If local groups are to be responsible for their own development, then respect for the dynamism of such groups is an essential element in the process.

7.2 At the Regional Level

Many problems are capable of solution at the grassroots level. Every locality is familiar with its own limits, possibilities and resources.

Knowledge of the possibilities for future employment in each region is necessary for defining training objectives. To this end, a regional planning group would appear necessary. There must be a coming together of businessmen, union leaders, municipal authorities, representatives of cooperatives and the most dynamic representatives of the community. Such a body might be convened by the school board and its Adult Education Service or some other competent organization. It goes without saying, that those initiating such a project would have to respect the autonomy of those invited to participate.

The objective would be to establish a basis for collaboration between the training system and employers and youth organizations. From this would come better preparation of young people for the labour market. Businessmen have an interest in any increase in vocational training facilities. They stand to profit therefrom in both the medium and long term. They would recoup any investment they might have to make in training facilities in their first few working years from skilled employees. By participating in a regional operation, the unions would help in training and advancing their future members. They already see the need for significant changes in the restrictions which hedge in certain trades. They are also pressing to have the idea of work safety become part of teaching.

The regional concertation committee would access the number of jobless young people with problems between 15 and 24. They would inventory the region's training centres. On their part employers would define their manpower requirements.

Information regarding short and medium term job openings in the region is an invaluable element in the development of programs. From it training requirements may be defined, tailored to the needs of workers, management and young people. Investment and public works projects may also be analysed in terms of the training to be offered to future workers or in terms of what the community is capable of supporting.

By involving businessmen, it becomes possible to set up training programs responsive to the rapid changes occuring in industry and commerce. Vocational and technological requirements may be identified. The collaboration of those involved may cover many areas, from an analysis of needs to the development of courses, from official recognition of skills acquired to teaching methods, from the supervision of in-service training to the evaluation of what students have learned. In this way, the quality of vocational training can be up-graded and the hiring of workers made less complicated.

7.3 Forecasting the Job Market

The quality of any system of vocational training is largely dependent on access to exact data regarding the future of the job market.

At the present moment, exact information regarding future employment, career opportunities, and working conditions is imprecise, even in the short term. It is because of this that vocational training courses continue to be organized for fields which are already saturated. Many sectors offer no hope of job openings in certain regions; nursing, social workers, construction... For example, the majority of the electricians who completed their courses last year have not yet found employment.

Analysis of those sectors of industry which are expanding in the community enables one to identify those skills and trades which call for vocational training. Some sectors are on the verge of major expansion. The heavy investments of the past few years in pulp and paper, energy, environmental protection and cybernetics open the door to interesting employment prospects, The areas crying for skilled workers may also be identified. Technicians are in demand and find jobs quite easily. The same is true of workers whose speciality is tool-making.

While it is important to provide the greatest possible number of workers with the required skills, care must also be taken not to saturate certain sectors of employment. The regional concertation table can, in part, avoid such an eventuality by identifying short term job opportunities in the region. Among other things, it should look into the employment potential of food processing, machine making, chemical and pharmaceutical production, transportation, electrical equipment and of paper and metal fabrication. The regional table should also analyse the demand for textiles and leather products, for clothing, furniture and forest products, and for printing in the region.

Given the present conditions of economic crisis, the Conseil realizes the need of concertation in order to coordinate all aspects of vocational training, the labour market and of work in the community.

7.4 A Community Responsibility

Real concertation would enable all organizations active in a community better to co-ordinate and articulate their work with young people. A valuable example of such concertation is provided by the Adult Education Services of Grand-Portage. The community proposes to help unemployed young people between the ages of seventeen and thirty. The aim is to involve all these young persons, and to have them identify their needs in terms of education and jobs. The social agencies and educators have for their part, undertaken to find the means of providing either jobs in community projects, or educational services, for these young persons. In this way young people may be led to active participation in the life of the community.

Similar activities of concertation are being carried out in many regions of Québec under the aegis of dynamic organizations with a solid base in their community. Being close to the young people, they exert a real influence on their social insertion. They appear to be particularly effective and promising at this time when, in Québec, the limitations of intervention by the State are more clearly discernible.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation recommends:

16. That the Adult Education Services, or some other recognized organization, assume the responsibility of assuring concertation in its region between those responsible in education, manpower, industry and unions with the aim of designing courses in vocational training in terms of the present and future needs of the labour market;

17. That local organizations offering services to young adults (Manpower Centres, Adult Education Services, youth groups, community or parish organizations, C.L.S.C., Maison des Jeunes, guidance, assistance or lodging services) work together in order better to coordinate their activities and set up a central agency for informing, referring and sheltering young people in need of assistance or guidance, or who are trying to find themselves.

CONCLUSION - Helping Young People to Find Themselves

A challenge for those responsible for education.

Analysis of the conditions under which the young people of Québec find themselves «in limbo» between the school and the work place presents a challenge to those responsible for education and labour. These latter must inquire after and find effective solutions to bring about their active participation in society.

With this in mind, the Conseil was in a position to study the recently announced plan of government action to encourage the social and vocational insertion of young people[61]. The measures included in this plan, as well as the creation of a Secrétariat à la jeunesse, represent the beginning of activities susceptible of improving the difficult conditions under which too many young people exist.

The principal mandate of the Secrétariat à la jeunesse is that of co-ordinating the activities of the various Ministères responsible for working with young adults. In addition, the Conseil hopes, through this advice, to contribute to the setting in motion of activities which it holds to be essential and to advance the discussion regarding young people.

Many of the recommendations included in this advice raise fundamental questions concerning a better division of their educational mission among those responsible for education and other social institutions. The importance of the prenomenon of the marginalization of young people and the Conseil's analysis thereof, draw attention to effects which are neither accidental nor temporary; it presages important changes in the equilibrium of social institutions and presents, in many ways, a real challenge to Québec society.

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61. Secrétariat général du Conseil exécutif, Les jeunes face à la crise: une action gouvernementale concertée, Québec, March 1983.

This challenge should incite the various educational authorities, in particular, to take a long second look at where they are leading the schools of Québec, at the consequences of the regulations and grand policies they are drawing up and at the actual degree of accessibility and of adaptation required of an educational system called upon to meet the new needs of youth and of society.

In this regard, the Conseil has already encouraged the Ministère de l'Education to follow up the important study concerning «La formation et l'insertion des jeunes de 15 à 18 ans dans la société».[62] This study posed some fundamental questions concerning the school's role in relation to that of other social institutions. Unless answers be found, such questions and new educational formulae be discovered, there is a great risk of the Québec school's failing to meet the needs of the young people and society of today.

Tne urgent need to act and work together.

The vocational training of 500 000 young adults who need it is a key to economic prosperity. Their insertion into the work force is part of the price of social peace and of the medium term economic development of our society.

But, illusions are useless. Of what use is the best of school systems if its graduates cannot find suitable jobs? It is not, surely, up to the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation to lay out a course of socio-economic development. But, the Conseil can, in no way, keep silent in the face of the crisis conditions under which Québec's young people exist. It is vital that they be provided with useful jobs. There is no lack of possible initiatives. What is essential, important, indispensable, nay, urgent, is to act so as to give youth back its dreams, and to provide its members with jobs and occupations commensurate with their training and expectations.

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62. Réginald Grégoire, op. cit.

The Conseil is very much aware that all of the conditions required for the application of the recommendations it has submitted cannot be met by the schools, nor by industry, nor by citizens' groups, at the present time. But it is convinced that Québec society can, and must, follow the general direction of these proposals, for the sake of those who find themselves on the outside of the system, looking in. Today's youth must be provided with facilities for training in up-to-date skills as rapidly as is possible.

Further, young people are searching desperately for a place in this society and want to make their mark and chart their future. In the final analysis, this society is theirs and they want to participate now. Their social and vocational insertion must not be limited to courses in vocational training, the creation of jobs or passive integration into an established system. It implies a capacity for the active participation of young people in a renewed social dynamic and a capacity for social reform.

The challenge faced by our society is no small one and all the resources of our society must be called upon, whether they be those of educators, of industrial leaders, of union leaders, of youth workers, of political decision makers, without forgetting those of youth itself. There can be no overall or single solution to the problems of young people. Such problems cannot be solved only in terms of structure or grand policies, they will only be resolved by the positive actions of persons and organizations with a real social conscience.

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